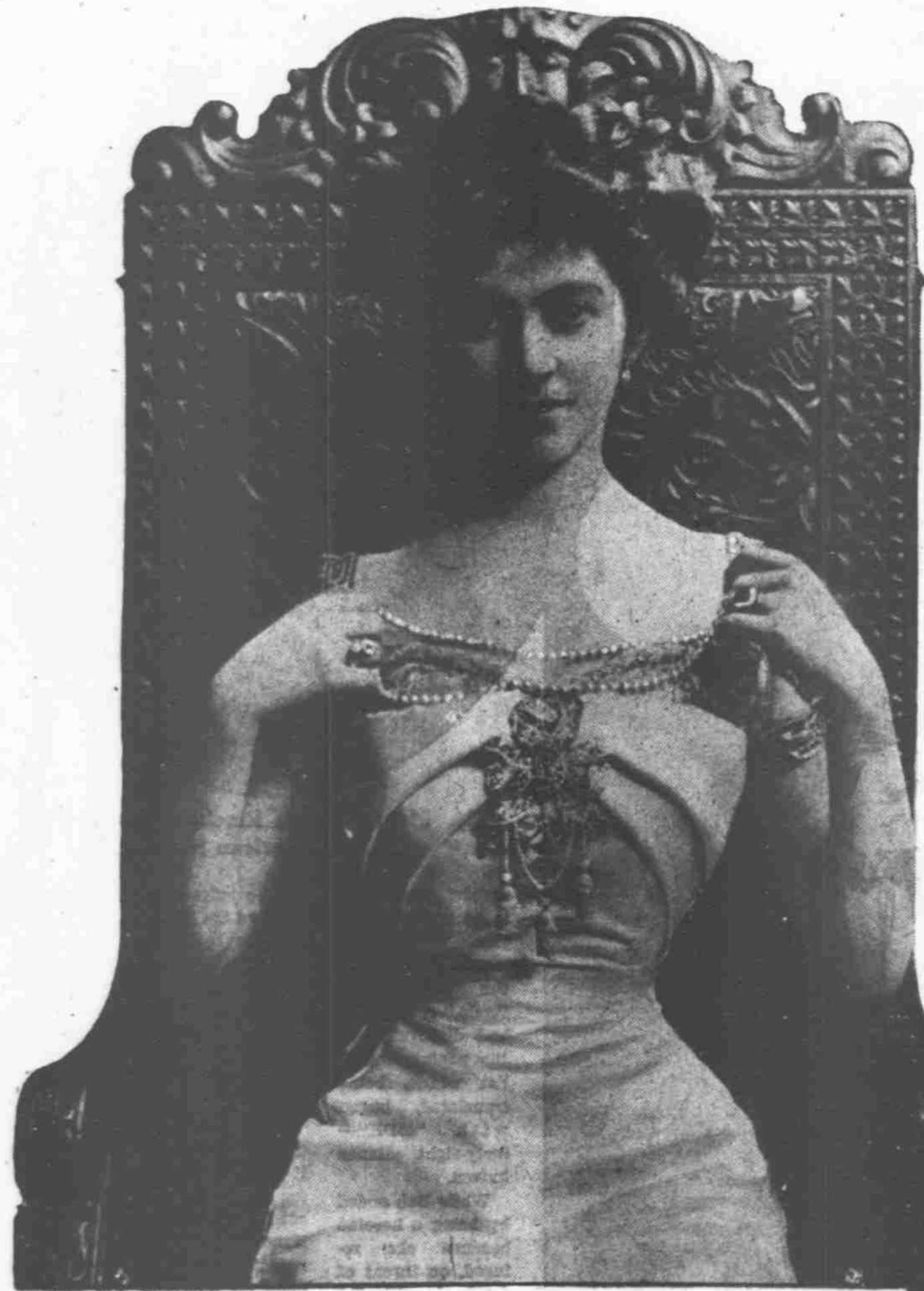


What Happened After the Gay Vi

Poisoned by One of Her Admirers, Pretty Billy Carleton's Death Has
of London Night Dissipations Which Have
England and Stirred the Police to Cleanse
Plague Spots of the British Capital



The Duchess of Westminster, who was largely responsible for the success of the great Victory Ball and who was inexpressibly shocked when she learned that the sinister tragedy of Billie Carleton's death had dimmed the memory of this brilliant occasion.

CHAPTER III.

(Continued from Last Sunday)
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CONTINUING the examination of witnesses in the effort to throw light upon the mystery of the death of Billie Carleton, whose lifeless body was found in her apartments a few hours after she had left the gay Victory Ball in London last November, Coroner Oddie called Lionel Belcher, the actor, and pursued his inquiry as to how Belcher and Billie Carleton's friend, Reggie de Veulle, were procuring narcotic drugs for the actress.

THE CORONER: De Veulle complained about the strength of cocaine he was getting?

MR. BELCHER: Yes, this cocaine was procured from a Chinaman named Lo Ping You, in Limehouse Causeway.

Q. What did de Veulle ask you to do?

A. He asked if I had anything stronger. I said I could get some stronger, and he asked me to get some for him. I got it from Lisle street. I have had two lots. It was another \$50 lot, and it was the second lot of which de Veulle had half, not the first one. I had asked him \$50 or \$75 for it, but I only got \$25. I supplied it to him in three or four different lots. About three times I supplied it through the servant, whom I only knew by her name of McGinty, and once at Hockley's.

On Monday, November 25, I had a wire to meet McGinty outside the Cafe Royal at 9:30 at night. I guessed what it was about, and I took cocaine with me, carrying it in paper. She was with a soldier, and she asked me if I had got it. I said "Yes," and gave it to her. She said she wanted it for de Veulle. I do not think she paid me that time; she said I would be paid later. De Veulle had said previously that he must have some cocaine for the Victory Ball.

On Tuesday I had another wire in the evening from McGinty. I met her again. I had no cocaine then. I believe the wire was brought to me at the Cafe Royal. I told McGinty this, and she suggested coming up in the morning for it at the flat. This was arranged for the morning of the Victory Ball. She came about 10:15. I was in bed.

Q. Anybody with you?

Belcher hesitated.

A. Well—(and he gave the name of an actress who was called a little later.)

Coroner Oddie said it was material, otherwise he should have spared the lady's name. She would probably be called as a witness, so it could not be helped.

Q. Did McGinty come into the bedroom?

A. Yes, I gave her this cocaine in a piece of paper.

Q. Did you write anything on the paper?

A. Yes, it was marked \$25.

Q. Did she give anything then?

A. I believe that was when she gave me \$25. I had said the night before, "What has happened to the other lot?" and she said "he" had given it to a friend.

Q. Did you see de Veulle with Miss Carleton at the Victory Ball?

A. He spoke a few words, I think.

Q. Did you speak to him later?

A. Once or twice.

Q. One special occasion—something about cocaine?

A. Oh, yes, once, when he said, "I am going to take a sniff of cocaine." Miss Carleton said she had been very worried about certain personal matters—jealousy and different things.

Q. Who was it about?

A. Mr. and Mrs. de Veulle.

Q. Did she say that she had had some cocaine?

A. Yes. I was very surprised when I heard of Miss Carleton's death. I had no idea that she drugged to that extent.

Q. How did you know it was anything to do with drugs?

A. There were rumors afterward in the papers. It was the paper that called my attention to it.

Q. Whom did you go and see?

A. Various people. I went to see the de Veulles—I think it was on the Friday—with my solicitor.

Q. Try and recollect what de Veulle said.

A. He said he knew nothing about the affair, and was not going to know anything about it. I was advised by Mr. Cran, my solicitor, to listen. I was very undecided what view to take.

Q. Did you ask de Veulle any direct question about cocaine?

A. I asked if he had given any to Billie. He did not answer that question.

Q. Did he say anything to you about what you were to do?

A. To know nothing as well.

Q. That was in relation to the inquest?

A. Yes.

Q. What else did he say?

IT was the night of the great Victory Ball—November 27. The famous Royal Albert Hall in London was gayly decorated with the flags of the victorious Allies. England's best known men and women of title, of wealth and fashion, the diplomatic representatives of the foreign embassies and the stage favorites of London theatres were there. Lady Diana Manners led the grand march as "Britannia," the Duchess of Westminster was "England," the Countess of Drogheda was "Air." All wore fancy dress, and four thousand tickets had been sold.

The hand of Fate singled out one of the youngest, prettiest, most popular women among those four thousand revellers to mark that night with a tragedy which has shaken all London. Miss Billie Carleton, the fascinating little comedy star of "The Freedom of the Seas," at the Haymarket Theatre, sparkling with animation, was at the ball. In the early hours of dawn her gay party breakfasted in her apartments at Savoy Court Mansions. That afternoon her lifeless body was found in her rooms. She had been poisoned by some narcotic drug.

What had happened? Whose hand had supplied the drug? The London authorities instantly set themselves about the task of unravelling the

mystery of the tragedy of the Victory Ball. And revelations of the dark side of London's night life were stage or in the movies.

Malvina Longfellow, Fay Compton and Mrs. Vera stage women, figured in the testimony, and Olive Richardson answered embarrassing questions without a blush.

But de Veulle—Raoul Reginald de Veulle—under of Coroner Oddie, stood revealed as an accomplished stage actor had extended to Paris and to New York. Asked why Billie Carleton should take an affectionate interest, answered: "My beauty, I suppose!"

The searchlight of the law was turned on every part of the fashionable gatherings at the famous "Murray" shadows of the Chinatown slums. Interwoven through pictures of the night side of London which are seldom is said and done in the opium parlors of London's Chinatown, nor are the happenings at the private of actresses apartments often revealed.

When the theatres had been emptied and the night then began the scenes of all-night dissipation England and stirred the London police to activity.



Mrs. Reggie de Veulle, whose jealousy of her husband's attention to Billie Carleton was the subject of careful investigation by the Coroner on account of the possibility that this might furnish a motive for the mysterious and sudden death of the jolly young actress.

MR. BELCHER: Yes.

Q. As a result of her being friendly with—?

A. (interrupting) His intimacy with Billie Carleton.

Q. There was no reason for any jealousy?

A. She said not.

Q. Did she tell you it was a ridiculous thing?

A. Yes. She said there was not the slightest ground for Mrs. de Veulle being jealous.

Q. Miss Carleton had not taken it to heart?

A. Not until that night.

Q. Did she tell you she had seen Mrs. de Veulle and told her it was ridiculous, and that Mrs. de Veulle had accepted it as ridiculous, and there was no reason for jealousy?

A. That is quite right.

Q. Mrs. de Veulle had come to her crying?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. And Mrs. de Veulle had accepted that there was no need for jealousy?

A. Yes, the same as she had on many occasions.

Q. She gave you the impression that Mrs. de Veulle's jealousy weighed upon her?

A. Yes.

Q. In spite of the fact that Mrs. de Veulle had accepted her suggestion that there was nothing in it?

A. Would you not come to the same conclusion?

MR. VALETTA (sharply): You must not ask me questions?

MR. BELCHER: She had had this happen many times. That is the only answer I can give you, that she placed no faith in it at all. I did not state on the last occasion what I have now said, because I wished to shield de Veulle. I took some heroin on the night of the Victory Ball, but I did not suggest that Miss Carleton gave me any that night. I spent very little time with her at the ball, and I did not see her with the gold box there. I recog-

nize it now, with the jewels on top. It was one of a set, and she took it from Mrs. de Veulle one night.

MR. CHATTERTON (representing de Veulle): You realize what you have said to-day is hostile to Mr. de Veulle?

MR. BELCHER: Yes.

Q. Do you know anything about opium-smoking parties?

A. Yes. Miss Olive Richardson, Miss Carleton, Mr. de Veulle and myself at Kimful's flat. I had been doping before their arrival, and was rather sleepy.

CORONER: What do you mean by doping—opium?

A. No, heroin.

Q. All of you, or only you?

A. All of us.

MR. CHATTERTON: And had you been smoking opium?

A. No.

Q. Were you so hopelessly under the influence of the drug that you did not know what happened?

A. I was able to get up and shake Miss Carleton's hand. There was another little doping party at de Veulle's, and there was one prior to that. I have smoked opium twice in Chinatown. I have smoked opium at Mr. and Mrs. de Veulle's and at my own flat.

Q. Didn't Miss Olive Desmond give one of these doping parties? Who was present?

A. Mr. and Mrs. de Veulle, Miss Billie Carleton, Mrs. Lo Ping You and myself. Mrs. Lo Ping is an English woman married to a Chinaman, and she cooked the opium. I believe that Mrs. de Veulle had never taken any drug before with them, and I admit that I was one of many who pressed her on that occasion to do so.

MR. CHATTERTON: A pretty gallant sort of thing to do with a lady not addicted to opium.

A. It is very harmless; it is about the least harmful of them all.

Q. Miss Carleton gave a party, did she not, at de Veulle's flat?

A. That is quite right. Miss Carleton, Mr. and Mrs. de Veulle, Miss Olive Richardson, Miss Rutland, Mrs. Ping and myself were present. It was last September. The party cost \$50.

Q. I put it to you that it was more like \$50 a head?

A. Certainly not. Miss Carleton and I halved the cost. Mr. and Mrs. de Veulle did not take any active part, retiring to bed shortly after the opening of the meeting. Then it came my turn to give a party. There were present Miss Richardson, Miss Rutland, Mr. Ford and myself.

Q. Do you swear that you never gave a party at which Miss Carleton and Mr. de Veulle were present?

A. I never recall doing that. Miss Carleton and Mr. de Veulle were not of my party because of a little friction. There was sometimes friction at these parties. One night Miss Carleton asked me to take her down to Chinatown. I did so. It was very late at night—I should say about 1 or 2 in the morning—when we started. We got down there in about an hour. The taxi waited, and we returned about 6 o'clock. When she got back she was very ill. I went down smoking opium with Miss Carleton. It cost between \$25 and \$50, and she and I shared.

Reference was made in a previous chapter to the indescribable dissipation of London's Chinatown in the ancient, vile and loathsome Limehouse district. Perhaps no better picture of London's Chinatown has been made than the descriptions in Mr. Thomas Burke's book, "Limehouse Nights," from which the following is taken: "It was night in Limehouse. Out of the colored darkness of the Causeway stole the muffled wail of reed instruments, and, though every window was closely shuttered, between the joints shot jets of light and stealthy voices, and you could hear the whisper of slipped feet and the stuttering steps of the satyr and the sadist. It was to the cafe in the middle of the Causeway, lit by the pallid blue light that is the symbol of China throughout the world, that Cheng Huan came to take a dish of noodle and some tea. Thence he moved to another house whose